

C A N A D A

PROVINCE OF QUÉBEC  
DISTRICT OF MONTRÉAL  
N° 500-17-

S U P E R I O R C O U R T

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**ICHRAK NOUREL HAK**

- and -

**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CANADIAN  
MUSLIMS (NCCM)**

- and -

**CORPORATION OF THE CANADIAN  
CIVIL LIBERTIES ASSOCIATION**

**Plaintiffs**

v.

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF  
QUÉBEC**

**Defendant**

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**AFFIDAVIT OF BASIR NAQVI**

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I, the undersigned, BASIR NAQVI, residing and domiciled at [...], do solemnly affirm the following:

1. I was born and raised in the West Island in Montreal. I attended public primary and secondary school before doing a program in Health Sciences at Marianopolis College.
2. After this, I started a program in Honours Software Engineering at McGill University before switching to a Bachelor's in Commerce (B.Com.) in Information Systems after one semester. I graduated at the top of my class and was President of the Management Information Systems Student Association.
3. When I finished my B.Com., I started a business in advertising, but due to personal circumstances I had to put that on hold and start regular employment. For three years I worked at FortNine, Canada's largest powersports e-commerce retailer,

heading multiple departments. While doing this, I applied to law school at McGill out of a desire to do something for the Montreal and Quebec Muslim communities.

4. I was accepted by McGill Law and started law school in September 2016. I finished my law degree in May 2019, and at this point I am continuing to work in e-commerce while I decide whether legal work is for me, especially given the restrictions created by the *Act respecting the laicity of the state* (the “**Act**”).
5. I was raised as a Muslim and I remain a practicing Muslim to this day. I am an active member of Montreal’s Muslim community and have been for many years, and my faith is an important part of my daily life. To that end, as part of my faith, I wear two religious symbols.
6. First, the Prophet Mohammad wore a beard and asked his companions not to remove theirs. As a result, all Muslim men are encouraged to wear beards and I do so as well for explicitly this religious purpose. I have done so from the day it started growing and have never removed it.
7. Second, I wear a Muslim skullcap that is called a “topi” or “kufi”. This is a minor religious tenet to keep the head covered, as the Prophet Mohammad always kept his head covered. I wear this to identify myself as a Muslim in public and to be as visible as my Muslim sisters. I feel that Muslim women get the brunt of anti-Muslim discrimination because they are more visible, so I try myself to be more visible in a show of solidarity.
8. Wearing these religious symbols is part of my identity. It is important to me specifically to be identified as a Muslim as I go about my day as a good citizen. In addition to being a visible expression of my faith, wearing religious symbols publicly and identifying as a Muslim in public is, for me, a part I can play in countering negative stereotypes against Muslims in Quebec society.
9. When the Government introduced Bill 21, the *Act respecting the laicity of the state*, prohibiting a variety of public sector workers – including many public sector lawyers – from wearing any religious symbols, I was appalled.
10. The law makes me, as a practicing Muslim, feel expressly excluded from important institutions of Quebec society. I feel that it exacerbates exclusionary sentiment in Quebec not only towards Muslims but equally to other visible religious minorities.
11. Specifically, the immediate impact of the Act is to exclude me from taking part in an important aspect Quebec legal society. While in law school, I was in fact considering being a public prosecutor as a potential career. Now my career options have shrunk, since if I wanted to be hired as a prosecutor, the Act would oblige me to remove my skullcap. Because my beard is a religious symbol, the Act would even require me to shave my beard.

12. There is no question that I would never compromise on my religious freedom and my freedom to wear what I choose as a reflection of my religious beliefs for the sake of getting a job. If it was a job I really wanted, I would fight any restriction on my religious freedoms. Otherwise, I would probably be forced to choose another career – in my view, an unacceptable “choice” to make.
13. The bottom line is that the Government cannot dictate what I choose to display as a show of my faith as a condition of my participating in public life. Now that it has attempted to do so, I am not sure what I will do going forward in terms of my career.
14. All of the facts contained in the present affidavit are true and to my personal knowledge.

AND I HAVE SIGNED : Basir Naqvi

MONTRÉAL, June 11, 2019



Solemnly declared before me  
In Montréal, June 11, 2019



Commissioner of Oaths for the Province of Québec

